

Health Update:

Update 1: **Salmonella Saintpaul Cluster Found in Eastern Missouri**

July 11, 2008

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov>

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Health Update
July 11, 2008**

**FROM: JANE DRUMMOND
DIRECTOR**

Subject: *Salmonella* Saintpaul Cluster Found in Eastern Missouri

This document updates information contained in a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Health Advisory issued June 12, 2008.

Summary: Cases of salmonellosis associated with the multi-state outbreak of *Salmonella* Saintpaul infections continue to be reported. Currently, there have been over 1,000 cases reported nationally that are part of this outbreak. The state of Missouri is now reporting 15 cases of *S. Saintpaul* infection that match the nationwide outbreak strain. At the present time, DHSS, local public health agencies (LPHAs), and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are investigating a cluster of *S. Saintpaul* cases in Eastern Missouri.

DHSS is reminding medical providers that the outbreak is ongoing, and is requesting the assistance of medical providers in continuing to identify and promptly report suspected cases of *Salmonella* Saintpaul to the LPHAs, or to the DHSS at 800/392-0272 (24/7). This is important because it provides public health officials with vital information necessary to better understand the outbreak and prevent additional persons from becoming infected.

Medical providers should be on the alert to screen patients with signs/symptoms of *Salmonella* infection. Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12-72 hours after infection. Infection is usually diagnosed by culture of a stool sample. The illness generally lasts 4-7 days. Although most people recover without treatment, severe infections may occur. Infants, elderly persons, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely than others to develop severe illness.

Background: Since April, 1,090 persons infected with *Salmonella* Saintpaul with the same genetic fingerprint have been identified in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. These were identified because clinical laboratories in all states send *Salmonella* strains from ill persons to their state public health laboratory for characterization.

Although the outbreak was initially associated with the consumption of raw tomatoes, other vegetables may also be involved. Until health officials know that the contaminated product or products are no longer on the market, persons with increased risk of severe infection, including infants, elderly persons, and those with impaired immune systems, should not eat raw jalapeño peppers, or raw serrano peppers. They should also only eat raw tomatoes that are on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safe list (see the link to FDA's website, below). Produce grown at home is not part of this warning. Other persons who are concerned and who want to reduce their risk of *Salmonella* infection can take similar precautions. Consumers should be aware that raw jalapeño peppers are often used in the fresh preparation of salsa, pico de gallo, and other dishes.

CDC and FDA updates on the national investigation, as well as current recommendations, are available at:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/saintpaul/>
- <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/tomatoes.html>

Questions should be directed to DHSS's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573/751-6113, 866/628-9891, or 800/392-0272 (24/7).

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